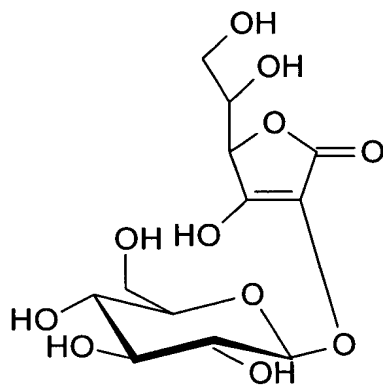


AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Original) 2-O-(β -D-Glucopyranosyl) ascorbic acid represented by the following formula (1):



or a biologically acceptable salt or ester thereof.

2. (Original) A provitamin C composition comprising 2-O-(β -D-glucopyranosyl) ascorbic acid extracted from a plant.

3. (Original) A composition according to claim 2, wherein the plant is a plant of the family *Solanaceae*.

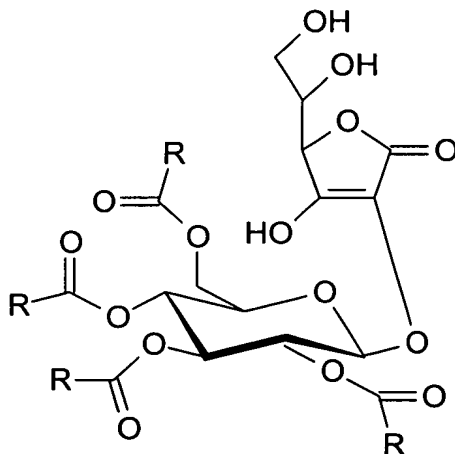
4. (Original) A composition according to claim 3, wherein the plant is a plant of *Lycium genuse*, or the fresh or dried fruit of *Lycium genuse*.

5. (Original) A production process for 2-O-(β -D-glucopyranosyl) ascorbic acid by extraction from a plant.

6. (Original) A production process according to claim 5, wherein the plant is a plant of the family *Solanaceae*.

7. (Currently Amended) A production process according to claim 5 [[or 6]], wherein the plant is a plant of *Lycium genuse*, or the fresh or dried fruit of a plant of *Lycium genuse*.

8. (Original) 2-O-(Tetra-O-acyl- β -D-glucopyranosyl) ascorbic acid represented by the following formula (2):



wherein each R in the formula independently represents a C₁₋₅ alkyl group.

9. (Original) The compound of claim 8, wherein all of the R groups in formula (2) are acetyl groups.

10. (Original) A production process for 2-O-(β -D-glucopyranosyl) ascorbic acid using a 2-O-(tetra-O-acyl- β -D-glucopyranosyl) ascorbic acid derivative as an intermediate.

11. (Original) A production process for 2-O-(β -D-glucopyranosyl) ascorbic acid by reaction of ascorbic acid and β -D-glucosyl compound using a β -D-glucosyltransferase.

12. (Original) A production process according to claim 11, characterized in that the 2-O-(β -D-glucopyranosyl) ascorbic acid is produced along with 6-O-(β -D-glucopyranosyl) ascorbic acid.

13. (Original) A production process for 2-O-(β -D-glucopyranosyl) ascorbic acid according to claim 11, characterized in that the β -D-glucosyltransferase is a cellulase.

14. (Currently Amended) A provitamin C composition comprising 2-O-(β -D-glucopyranosyl) ascorbic acid produced by the production process of ~~any one of claims 10 to 13~~ claim 10.

15. (Currently Amended) A provitamin C composition comprising 2-O-(β -D-glucopyranosyl) ascorbic acid produced by the production process of ~~any one of claims 10 to 13~~ claim 10, together with 6-O-(β -D-glucopyranosyl) ascorbic acid.

16. (Currently Amended) A food containing 2-O-(β -D-glucopyranosyl) ascorbic acid according to ~~any one of claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 14 or 15~~ claim 1, or a composition comprising the same as a provitamin C.

17. (Original) A food according to claim 16, which is a vitamin C-fortified food.

18. (Currently Amended) An ultraviolet damage protector containing 2-O-(β -D-glucopyranosyl) ascorbic acid according to ~~any one of claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 14 or 15~~ claim 1, or a composition comprising the same as a provitamin C.

19. (Currently Amended) A whitening cosmetic containing 2-O-(β -D-glucopyranosyl) ascorbic acid according to ~~any one of claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 14 or 15~~ claim 1, or a composition comprising the same as a provitamin C.

20. (Currently Amended) A wrinkle/sag-preventing cosmetic containing 2-O-(β -D-glucopyranosyl) ascorbic acid according to ~~any one of claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 14 or 15~~ claim 1, or a composition comprising the same as a provitamin C.

21. (Currently Amended) A pharmaceutical composition for preventing skin aging comprising the 2-O-(β -D-glucopyranosyl) ascorbic acid or a biologically acceptable salt or ester thereof of claim 1 ~~or the composition of claim 2, 3, 4, 14 or 15 as a provitamin C component.~~

22. (New) A pharmaceutical composition for preventing skin aging comprising the composition of claim 2 as a provitamin C component.